

Indian Rose Annual - IRA 1980

Better Roses For India

M. S. Viraraghavan

A comparative newcomer in the field, I started hybridisation of roses in 1966. The hybridisation programme followed by me so far lays particular emphasis on two features: 1. petal texture, 2. heat resistance. With this in mind, the effort has been to evolve better roses for India by crossing such traditional varieties as Gruss en Teplitz, Cecile Brunner, Rose Edward, etc., which do well in the tropical heat, with imported varieties endowed with complementary qualities.

A detailed account of my work is available in the Souvenir brought out on the occasion of the First All India Rose Convention, January 1978.

In future also, I intend to persist with the same approach, with particular emphasis on producing a better yellow Hybrid Tea, and a dark mauve-purple Hybrid Tea, suitable for Indian conditions. Work is also being done on the evolution of roses in the hand-painted strain, as well as miniatures of better HT form and bushy growth in tropical warmth.

I have been asked by the editors to offer my comments on what should be done to promote rose-hybridisation in India. In my view, if rose-hybridisation is to progress in the country, it is essential that plant patent laws are introduced immediately. The Indian Rose Federation should take up this cause — as already stressed in my article contributed to the First All India Rose Convention, 1978.

Here are the descriptions of the ten varieties introduced by me so far:

HYBRID TEAS

1. KANCHI — 1976. Gruss en Teplitz x Unknown. This variety produces unusually large and full blooms in the richest shades of magenta purple on a strong bushy plant. Mr. Kasturi Rangan of K. S. G. Son states that this variety is likely to become a standard one for rose garlands in tropical India. It has a tea fragrance.
2. KOVALAM — 1976. (Amberlight x Traumland) x Western Sun. The rounded buds are light amber in tone and open to unusually fragrant double flowers of white shading to cream and amber in the centre.
3. DHARMAPURI — 1978. First Prize x [(Gruss en Teplitz x Unknown) x Samurai]. The flowers are an eye-catching shade of brick red blending to rose red with unusual flower form — clearly the contribution of First Prize.
4. VANAMALI — 1979. Lady X x [(Gruss en Teplitz x Unknown) x Lake Comer] x Angel Face), Bred with the warm tropical climate in mind this lilac H. T. bears exceedingly well shaped buds of pure dark mauve which open to large high-centred flowers of orchid lavender. Of interest to exhibitors is the feature that the colour and form hold very well under refrigeration.

FLORIBUNDAS

5. FIRST OFFERING — 1973. Unknown Pink Tea Rose x Samba. This is one of the few modern roses raised from a direct cross with a Tea rose. From the Tea parent the variety has inherited tolerance to warm climate and freedom of flowering. The dwarf habit of growth and excellent petal texture are the features of the variety, as well as the colour which is dark red, but very bright.

6. MAHADEV — 1975. Gruss en Tepiitz x Unknown. One of the brightest in the vermillion orange range, the plants are bushy and foliage quite disease resistant. Has the unusual characteristic of producing the brightest coloured blooms during the monsoon period.
7. KADAMBARI — 1976. Little Darling x [Gruss en Tepiitz x (Honey Favourite x Unknown)]. This floribunda has unusually coloured flowers of pastel orange edged lac red with the centre and reverse ivory. The colour which gradually darkens remains bright to the end.
8. BHAGMATI — 1977. Charleston x [Roman Holiday x (Flamenco x Gold Gleam)]. The buds are a spectacular shade of anthurium scarlet with ivory white reverse opening to lovely bicolour blooms of claret red with golden centres. The petal texture is extraordinarily good and the bright green foliage very healthy. Flowers freely even in the height of summer. No fragrance.
9. AMRAPALI — 1979. (Amberlight x Traumland) x Honey Favourite x (Gruss en Tepiitz x Unknown). This is an advance in pink floribundas. The ovoid buds are rose pink opening to fully double flowers of salmon pink shading to amber towards the centre, with the petal edges lightly touched lilac in cool weather. Unusual vigour and disease resistance. Fragrant.

CLIMBER

10. KANYAKUMARI — 1978. Little Darling x [(Gruss en Tepiitz x Unknown) x Montezuma]. This climbing rose flowers freely on the Indian plains, as every shoot that is produced ends up with a flower or a cluster of three, of attractive salmon pink shaded orange flowers. No fragrance.

Copies of the original
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